

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING RONALD SYLVESTRI

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 9, 2018

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, Saint Joseph's Medical Center located in my district will host its annual Ball on November 3 and has chosen an outstanding slate of honorees for the event. One of those wonderful honorees, Ronald Sylvestri, has been working to improve the community for many years.

Ron was born in Yonkers on September 1, 1942. He attended Yonkers schools and attended C.W. Post College, LIU, graduating with a B.S. degree in Business in 1966. He is a distinguished alumnus and has served as a member of Long Island University's Board of Trustees since 1975. He is a recipient of the University's Chancellor's Award, the C.W. Post President's Medal.

Ron was Senior Vice President/Regional Manager of Hudson Valley Bank, New York City and formerly held high level executive posts with Fleet Bank Investment Group, Barclays Bank of New York and D.B.G. Development Corporation. He was a Charter Member of the Board of Directors of the Council of Governing Boards (CGB) since its founding in 1976. After having served in leadership positions as its Secretary and Vice Chairman, Ron became Chairman of CGB in 2005. Throughout, he led with dedication, tenacity and merit.

At Saint Joseph's, Ron serves as the Vice Chairman of St. Joseph's Health Fund. His extensive knowledge and expertise in banking and finance have been a tremendous asset to Saint Joseph's Medical Center. He has also been Vice Chairman of the Friends of Saint Dominic's Foundation since its formation in 2005 and chaired Saint Dominic's Golf Tournament for the past 25 years. Saint Dominic's dedicated the "Sylvestri Residence" in Rockland County for mentally challenged women in 1998. Ron was inducted into Saint Patrick's Cathedral as a Knight of Malta, American Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in 1982. He was honored with the St. Bartholomew School Distinguished Recognition and Community Service Award in 2001. The New York City Correction Officer's Association gave their Distinguished Service Award to Ron in 2002. He also received the New York Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation Dedicated Dad Award in 2009.

Ron and his wife Donna, whom he founded and chaired the Alzheimer's Golf Tournament for 17 years with, were married in 1972. They have two children, Ronald Jr. (Melissa) and Allyson (John). They are also blessed with four grandchildren; Madison Reagan Sylvestri, Ellie, Jack and Bobby Griffin.

Ron has accomplished a great deal and is most deserving of this warm recognition. Congratulations to him on the occasion.

ON THE TRAGEDY IN THE THOUSAND OAKS, CALIFORNIA WHICH CLAIMED THE LIVES OF TWELVE INNOCENTS LOST IN A SENSELESS MASS SHOOTING

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 9, 2018

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in sadness over the latest mass shooting, which occurred Wednesday evening, November 7, in Thousand Oaks, California when an armed 29-year-old man walked into the Borderline Bar & Grill in Thousand Oaks, California, opened fire, and killed 12 persons, including a 29-year veteran of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department who was on the eve of retirement.

The location of the shooting is especially tragic because the Borderline Bar & Grill was a sanctuary for survivors of last year's Las Vegas mass shooting—which ended the lives of 58 people—to gather and reflect in fellowship and support, following the horror of that night.

I am grateful to all first-responders for their quick work in containing this tragedy, including their valiance in limiting the loss of life.

As has now almost become commonplace, a community will begin the process of mourning those lost, and burying those who perished.

Then, before long, the country will return to life as normal, forgetting what transpired just outside of Los Angeles Wednesday night.

Beyond the horror of last night, Americans from across the nation and from all walks of life must consider that this is the 307th mass shooting event on the 311th day of this calendar year.

It comes less than two weeks after a gunman fueled by hate entered the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh and killed 11 parishioners in what constituted the largest hate crime against Jews in the history of the United States.

Americans are not more mentally-ill than citizens from other countries; we are not independently more prone to gun violence more than citizens from other countries; nor are the movies we watch and the music we listen to more violent than other comparable societies or countries.

The common thread through all of these shootings is the ready, easy access to firearms, ammunition, and weapons of war.

If we are to tackle this problem, we must be clear-eyed about the cause and harbor the resolve to forge a solution.

Congress and leaders throughout the nation must tackle this scourge and stem the tide of gun violence in the country.

If we do not, we are destined to be little more than helpless bystanders, and our citizens will continue to suffer and die.

On October 24, 2018, in Louisville, Kentucky, a man fatally shot Maurice E. Stallard,

inside a supermarket, and then killed Vickie Lee Jones, in the parking lot outside.

Both were grandparents.

There was no provocation to the killings, and the suspect was apprehended.

He is white, and his two victims were African American.

He had no connection to either victim, or the supermarket where he committed his murders.

Reports indicate that prior to the shootings, the suspect attempted but failed to enter a nearby black church.

Three of the deadliest mass shootings in American history have occurred within the last year, including one in a church in Sutherland Springs, in my home state of Texas.

In early November of 2017, twenty-six people were killed at First Baptist Church in rural Sutherland Springs, Texas, authorities said.

The church attacker was identified as 26-year-old Devin Patrick Kelley of New Braunfels, Texas.

Kelley was a former member of the U.S. Air Force charged in military court in 2012 on suspicion of assaulting his spouse and their child.

Kelley received a bad conduct discharge, confinement for 12 months, and was demoted to E-1, or airman basic.

On the day of the attack, Kelley dressed in all-black "tactical-type gear" and was wearing a ballistic vest and was armed with two weapons, a rifle and a handgun.

Kelley purchased the gun he used in the church shooting, a Ruger AR-556 rifle, in April 2016 from an Academy Sports + Outdoors store in San Antonio.

Earlier this year, a 17-year-old student armed with a shotgun and a pistol stormed Santa Fe High School, about 30 miles southeast of Houston, and opened fire in an art class, officials said.

The gunman killed 10 people and wounded at least 10 others, including a school resource officer who was left in critical condition, police said, before surrendering to the officers who confronted him.

Of those killed, eight were students and two were teachers, Santa Fe Independent School District Superintendent Leigh Wall said in a letter to parents.

The mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, which occurred in early February, was the eighteenth such mass shooting event in the first month-and-a-half of 2018.

The gunman, 19-year-old Nikolas Cruz, was believed to have been armed with an AR-15-style semi-automatic rifle and multiple magazines.

Six months prior to the Parkland shooting, the FBI was alerted after a YouTube user named "Nikolas Cruz" posted a comment stating "I'm going to be a professional school shooter" on the video site YouTube.

We see that these domestic terrorists have chosen to attack Americans in all facets of our daily lives.

This year alone 328 Americans have died and 1,251 Americans have been injured in mass shootings around the country.

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